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C E N T R A L I N T E L L I G E N C E A G E N C Y

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

17 December 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Board of National Estimates

SUBJECT : National Intelligence Projections for Planning

NOTE

National Intelligence Projections for Planning: Soviet Military Forces, has been produced in four annual editions; two editions of Intelligence Assumptions for Planning were produced prior to that. The IAP and the NIPP were requested by the Department of Defense to furnish intelligence in a package that would be useful for defense planning. After six years of production, and on the occasion of a change of administration, it is proper to review the pertinence of the NIPP to defense planning and the appropriateness of its production in ONE. This memorandum represents the views of the staff man involved [REDACTED]. It is written to promote useful discussion of the issues before the new fiscal year is upon us. It is organized in a series of propositions, with supporting judgments.

[REDACTED]
Chief, SMT Staff

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I. The NIPP is needed, and should be produced.

A. A comprehensive long range threat projection is needed by the defense planner.

1. The defense systems planning cycle needs projections of the nature of the threat some eight years in advance; the force planning cycle needs projections of the dimensions of the threat some six years in advance. These long lead times are forced on the defense planners by the increasingly complex nature of the military establishment. They are likely to get longer rather than shorter.

2. Department of Defense program planning cannot go ahead in a vacuum; it must have the best intelligence base available as a guide to the future threat. The requirements for threat projections as a basis for planning are well documented and are increasing. The demands for threat data inputs to the DOD planning cycle have been the subject of an endless flow of OSD and JCS memos. Just recently Mr. Nitze approved the establishment of a Long Range Threat Forecasts Group under DIA to explore the threat environment in the period 10-20 years in the future.

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3. It should be made clear at the outset that what is required by the planner is not firm information. He knows he cannot have this 3-10 years in advance. What he does need is the best judgment available as to the nature of the threat so that he can make the best decisions he can when those decisions have to be made. The nature of defense planning is such that he must find the optimum course of action at the time. He cannot wait for several years for better advice, desirable as this may be from the point of view of the intelligence officer.

B. The NIPP fulfills this need.

1. The national intelligence estimates address current forces and capabilities in some detail, and estimate forces and capabilities over the next 2-3 years in somewhat lesser detail, but DOD planning requires assessments of the threat beyond this time frame and in much greater detail than are furnished by the NIEs. In fact, the forces and capabilities intended to meet the threat over the next few years were developed and programmed many years ago. The NIE addresses only in general terms the period 3-10 years hence, which is the period of main concern to the DOD planner. The defense planners also state that the NIEs do not fill their needs in

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terms of the range of data. NIEs are not sufficiently detailed to provide the explicit inputs required by the methods and techniques employed in defense planning.

2. The NIPP was created to fill this gap in the intelligence input to defense planning. It is still inadequate to the needs of the planners, but it goes much further in being responsive to their need for a comprehensive, long range intelligence projection of the threat than does any other document. It presents the best threat systems definitions and force projections available, in a manner and format useful to the planner, at the time that the planner requires them. On the testimony of OSD planners, it is the most useful intelligence document they get in the Pentagon.

C. This need is likely to grow in the future.

1. The systems analysis and force planning, programming, and budgeting approach which the NIPP is specifically tailored to serve will continue into the future. It is important to understand that these methods, while perhaps made slightly notorious in some circles by the McNamara administration, are not peculiar to that period in history. The use of the Planning-Programming-Budgeting and Systems Analysis techniques

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in defense planning started in the 1950s under a Republican administration. The growth of the computer industry in the 1960s, and the McNamara approach to the use of these techniques merely accelerated the growth. These techniques have now spread throughout the government by the requirement of the Bureau of the Budget, and it is very doubtful that they will be discarded in future defense planning. They will continue to be used, but perhaps in a more flexible fashion.

2. The NIPP, although originally created in response to the requirements of the planners in OSD, is used at all levels of defense planning: OSD, JCS, services, and major commands. They have the same need as the OSD for detailed, long range projections of the threat as an input to their planning. With the prospective greater decentralization of planning in the DOD under the new administration, the need for a common threat input for planning will grow, rather than diminish.

3. The NIPP gets much wider distribution among the planners than do the estimates; it is the most widely-distributed national intelligence document approved by USIB. Each copy is, on the average, used more often by more people than any other USIB approved publication. Moreover, the Joint Intelligence

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Estimates for Planning, produced by DIA for the JCS, relies upon the NIPP, and copies it. If the JIEP did not do this, the NIPP would have to be prepared in many more hundreds of copies. Service threat assessments, prepared in increasing numbers, rely upon the NIPP and reproduce the material in it.

4. The NIPP presents a large amount of information in a useful handbook format. As such it is used as a common source book by war gamers and other consumers in the Department of Defense as well as by planners. The computer programmer, who will increasingly dominate planning gaming, and programming, needs detailed and explicit numbers now found only in the NIPP.

D. There is also a need for the NIPP in the intelligence community.

1. The value of the NIPP does not lie only in its input to defense planning. It is also a vehicle that facilitates systematic organization and analysis of intelligence thinking about a series of intelligence problems of importance to the national security. It not only draws upon the results of intelligence research and analysis, it also is a guide to the effective use of intelligence resources.

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2. The NIPP relates all the parts of the Soviet military programs to one another and to the source requirements for nuclear materials, manpower, and money. It is the only document that does this in an explicit fashion. In doing this, it not only presents a more comprehensive picture of the Soviet military forces, it also causes the intelligence estimator and the analyst to consider the relationships between the forces and resources, and to consider Soviet problems of programming and planning.

3. Moreover the more systematic thinking about the Soviet forces that the NIPP forces on the intelligence community bring to light intelligence problems and issues which must then be addressed in the national estimates. The NIPP has, historically, addressed such problems as Soviet ABM and MIRV forces and capabilities in a systematic and explicit fashion at least a year before these issues were addressed in more than very general terms in the estimates.

4. Because the NIPP pinpoints intelligence issues and problems at an early stage, it is a valuable guide for the intelligence planner and programmer in NIPE who has to relate

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intelligence requirements to the effort to be made in meeting those requirements. The NIPP thus becomes a valuable tool in intelligence resource planning for the DCI and the NIRB.

E. The defense planner needs additional NIPPs.

1. Each Defense planning problem requires a specially tailored threat input, but the basic "handbook" of input material must be available in a community document. The NIPP now provides this for the Soviet threat alone.

2. There is no doubt that NIPPs on Warsaw Pact and Communist Chinese military forces are both desired and needed in military planning. They have been requested of USIB many times. The alternative, in the absence of such NIPPs, continues to be the construction of threat projections by the consumers themselves -- the planners. Although they are well aware of their requirements, they have little intelligence background to undertake the job they are forced to do by the failure of USIB to produce the required projections.

3. Production of Warsaw Pact and Communist Chinese NIPPs would help to systematize research and analysis in these areas, as it has in the Soviet military area.

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II. The NIPP should continue to be produced as national intelligence and approved by USIB and the DCI.

A. The NIPP should be national, rather than departmental or joint, intelligence.

1. The NIPP has placed the basic threat input to Defense and service level planning directly under the control of USIB intelligence. The title was changed from Intelligence Assumptions for Planning to National Intelligence Projections for Planning specifically to emphasize this point, at the request of the OSD.

2. A unified national threat projection is needed to assure that service planning can go forward as a piece. Before the IAP and the NIPP the services each planned on the basis of their own interpretation of the threat, as did the JCS and the OSD. The resolution of the differences between the various interpretations of the threat is not the job of the planner, but of the intelligence community.

3. The fact that the NIPP is national intelligence assures the DCI and the US intelligence community that the Defense and service planners will be relatively constrained in constructing their own threat or "red team" input to studies and war games; it "keeps them honest."

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4. Alternatives to a national intelligence projection for planning have been tried in the past and found unsatisfactory; they would be unsatisfactory in the future for the same reasons.

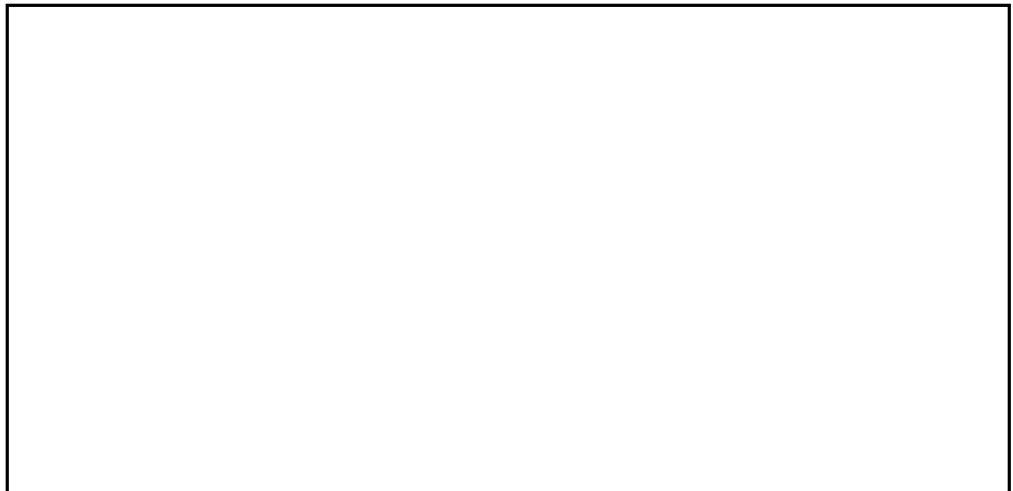
a. The JCS and OSD do not have the intelligence resources immediately at hand to create projections for planning; moreover they are subject to the tendency to tailor intelligence to the result. It is a well-established principle that intelligence and planning should be performed by different organizations.

b. DIA produces the JIEP, which is based on the NIPP. If DIA were to produce the JIEP on its own, it would fulfill the requirement of the planner insofar as detailed long-term projections were concerned. But the planner in OSD would be concerned that CIA, which has responsibility for intelligence concerning the national security of the US, may not, and in fact often does not, agree with the DIA views. The services would also be opposed to using the DIA product, in which they have no say, and with which they often do not agree. Experience has shown that neither OSD nor the services have been willing to leave the problem to

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DIA. There is the added sticky situation, of which General Carroll is well aware, that DIA works for the JCS, and must abide by any directed judgments handed down by the JCS.



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d. Joint intelligence efforts by CIA and DIA have proven to be useful in the resolution of specific technical problems requiring much expertise. Such joint efforts make a valuable input to the NIPP. But they do not incorporate the views of the service intelligence components, nor of NSA or the intelligence components of the AEC and State.

5. The great shortcomings of these alternatives has in the past been that they had no standing in all of the intelligence community as projections of the Soviet threat and

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therefore could not readily be imposed upon Defense and service planners as official US intelligence positions. It has been clear in the past that a coordinated USIB product was needed.

B. The NIPP should be produced under the DCI and approved by him.

1. The NIPP is now approved by the DCI in his position as head of the intelligence community and the president's intelligence advisor. The same considerations that require the NIPP to be produced under USIB imprimatur require that the NIPP be approved by the DCI.

2. This does not mean that he is a competent judge of every item of detailed projections within the NIPP; it means that he is satisfied that the NIPP conforms to judgments in the relevant NIEs, that it elaborates upon these judgments in a detail that is required by the planner, and that he, as the head of the intelligence community, presents these projections to be used as a basis for defense and service planning. He explains this position in his letter to all recipients of the NIPP.

3. As was pointed out earlier, the importance of the NIPP to the DCI applies not only to defense planning. It is also a valuable vehicle to organize and analyze intelligence

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community thinking about a series of intelligence problems of importance to national security. It also facilitates the DCI's planning of intelligence resources in the intelligence community in that this planning can be analyzed in the context of their projected intelligence target environments.

4. The advantages to the DCI of controlling the production of the NIPP indicated above apply at the present time only to his responsibility for producing national intelligence on the Soviet military forces. From the standpoint of DCI coordination and control, NIPPs on the Warsaw Pact and Communist Chinese military forces should also be produced.

III. The NIPP is estimative intelligence that should continue to be produced by ONE.

A. The NIPP is estimative intelligence.

1. The NIPP is clearly intended to reflect the judgments made in the NIEs concerning the future growth of the Soviet military forces, but to carry this quantification in more detail for the period of main interest to the planner -- some 3-10 years into the future.

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2. One can argue the differences between estimates as they appear in the NIEs and projections as they appear in the NIPP, but they are both concerned with the nature of the future military threat to the US national security. Moreover, the projections in the NIPP clearly depend largely upon informed judgment, as do the estimates. Thus, for all their differences in degree of confidence, they are of the same nature, as distinct from the research on current forces and development performed by the Offices of Strategic Research and Scientific Intelligence and FMSAC. The NIPP draws upon the expertise of the research offices, as does the estimate, but it is not a research job, and the estimative judgments in the NIPP should not be left to the research offices.

B. The NIPP has been, and should continue to be, produced by ONE.

1. The production of the NIPP draws upon the research offices of CIA and DIA; upon the intelligence and technical study groups of NSA, AEC, State, and the services; and upon the technical subcommittees of the USIB -- GMAIC, SIC, and JAEIC -- in the same manner, but to a far greater extent, than do the NIEs. In the process of producing the NIPP the USIB has also authorized, under the direction of ONE, the establishment of ad hoc working groups to assist in the coordination of force projections.

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2. ONE was established as an office of the DCI area specifically so that, organizationally, as well as in fact, it would represent the DCI in the production of national intelligence. ONE acts, as it were, as the executive arm of USIB in the production and coordination of national estimative intelligence. The NIPP is national estimative intelligence produced for the signature of the DCI in the same manner as the NIEs -- with the aid of the USIB intelligence machinery -- and approved by USIB as national intelligence projections for planning. Nothing would be gained by taking production out of ONE; in fact it would only unduly complicate the whole process of production, and create two, rather than one, points into which would funnel all the inputs to the national intelligence production machinery.

3. The NIPP tends to run away with the estimative process as it is. The nature and number of future Soviet weapons systems tend to be defined in the NIPP before they are in the NIE largely because of the reluctance of the NIE to come to grips with a problem before there is an adequate information base. With production of the NIPP located in ONE, this tendency can be monitored and controlled. In another office,

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the NIPP would tend to run even more ahead of the estimates. From the estimative point of view ONE would find judgments being made in the NIPP and approved by USIB, over which ONE had no control. This would degrade the value of the NIEs.

4. The NIPP is expected to interpret the judgments made in the NIEs, and express these judgments in terms of more explicit figures for the use of the planner. Because of the problems of coordination, which often require that language be put in the NIEs which can generally be agreed upon, that language is often subject to differing interpretations. ONE as the producer of the NIEs must be the office which interprets the meaning of the NIE. It should not allocate this function to some other office.

5. Nor should ONE let some other office produce the NIPP and then review it. Adequate review would take nearly as long as the production process itself. Moreover, experience has shown only too well that the initiative in producing the draft upon which the representatives meet is a valuable handle in determining the final nature of the product.

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6. Production of the NIPP is also a valuable tool in the hands of ONE by which it systematically reviews, in much more exhaustive and thorough fashion than do the terms of reference for the NIEs, the issues involved in Soviet military force planning and the likely force posture alternatives in relation to those issues. As such the production of the NIPP forces the intelligence community in general, and ONE in particular, to address issues which otherwise might get short shrift. It is an invaluable tool for improving the quality of the NIEs.

IV. ONE should accept the implications of producing the NIPP and implement programs to ensure its improvement.

A. ONE should accept the implications of producing the NIPP

1. Although the NIPP has been produced within the National Estimates mechanism by ONE for many years, some members of the Board of National Estimates appear to have an uneasy feeling about, if not outright antipathy to, the NIPP. They question the intellectual integrity of the product, regard its use as "dangerous" in the hands of the planner,

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feel that traditional NIEs are sufficient to meet the need, and rankle under the demands the NIPP places upon ONE in terms of production and review.

2. This feeling develops, in large part, because the essence of the NIPP is a quantitative numerical expression of what the BNE has classically supplied in essentially literary, descriptive terms. Many of the members of the BNE, being scholars and gentlemen, are not generally familiar with the techniques and methods used by force planners, especially as they have developed over the past decade, and are suspicious of the planners' demand for exact figures where none can be given with the same degree of assurance as found in the estimative judgments in the NIEs.

3. What has changed defense planning during the last ten years is the computer. The military planner realizes that the computer can more effectively deal with many of the problems of war gaming and defense planning that are so complex as to defy analysis except by the computer. He programs more and more of his planning so as to utilize this new tool, that can, however, digest only numbers. This is not to say that the computer should replace the sober value judgment, but

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rather that it should be used as a tool to illuminate the implications and options open to the planner, and the implications of these options, so that sober judgment can deal with a wider range of alternatives in a more thorough and effective fashion.

4. It should be clear from the discussion in parts I-III, however, that the NIPP is needed in the planning process, that the NIEs do not fill this need, and that the NIPP should continue to be produced by ONE within the National Estimates mechanism.

5. This tension between the needs of the planner and the natural reluctance of the estimator is amenable to solution. But the solution requires a closer look at the requirements for the NIPP and the attendant difficulties in producing it. This memo is presented as a first step in this direction. Specific recommendations for action follow.

B. The BNE should involve itself more directly in the NIPP.

1. The BNE should recognize that the NIPP has become a basic output of intelligence used in military planning and programming. It should also recognize that the NIPP can be

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used as an effective tool in improving intelligence on the military threat to the US and in the process of US intelligence program planning. It is recommended that: the BNE be given periodic briefings on the issues involved in the NIPP, the progress being made in the resolution of these issues, and the significance of the issues to US force and systems planning, to production of NIEs, and to the programming of US intelligence.

2. Chairmanship of the NIPP requires many hours of concentration and the resolution of detailed issues. The BNE member assigned to this chore has not been able to give the time and effort to the NIPP that is required. He carries a full NIE load, and chairs at least four estimates every year -- an average BNE load -- in addition to chairing the NIPP. The NIPP has become a year-round, full time job. It is recommended that: the BNE add another member with specific responsibility for the NIPP and its improvement.

3. The requirement for NIPPs on the Warsaw Pact countries of Eastern Europe and on Communist China has long been documented. It is recommended that: the BNE seriously consider the requests of the planners for these additional NIPPs.

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C. The Staff should be expanded so as adequately to handle the NIPP

1. Production of the NIPP involves administering a large intrastructure of some 10 committees and ad hoc working groups, assuring their timely and useful input to the NIPP, reviewing the product, presenting it in some 250 pages of text and tables, and shepherding this unwieldy mass through the estimates machinery so that it comes out of USIB as a clear and useful product that is at once in agreement with the estimates and responsive and timely to the needs of the consumer. The production responsibilities are greater than those of most staffs in ONE. For NIPP-68 eight separate projections went to the director for signature after approval by USIB. Yet this job is expected to be done by one person, and it is. But he has no additional time for briefing the members of the BNE, or for systematically improving the product. It is recommended that: the staff receive one additional man for production of the Soviet NIPP.

2. If production of a Warsaw Pact NIPP and a Communist Chinese NIPP are approved, additional personnel would be needed -- one for the Warsaw Pact NIPP and one for a

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Communist Chinese NIPP. The production responsibilities and techniques are sufficiently unique in the production of the NIPP that they would justify a separate staff to do the job. It is recommended that: if additional NIPP responsibilities are approved by USIB, that such an independent NIPP staff be created.

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